

Contributions.

IS THE SALVATION OF A SOUL A MIRACLE?

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The term salvation, in its relation to humanity, has a broad meaning. Its effects are far-reaching. They touch the complexity of human organism. Salvation bears with it life and vitality. It embraces the idea of rescue from destruction. It implies that help is extended. It leaves stimuli for greater exertion. It is the work of a Superior power upon an inferior. It implies exertion on the part of the recipient of the results of the work of the Superior.

We will observe salvation only as it relates to man's higher nature: the soul, the the psychic nature, the ego, the living principle within, the immortal element of man.

If the soul of man is in harmony with truth all is well. To rescue a soul from sin and save from eternal destruction is salvation.

Christ tells us that he came into the world to save that which was lost. Paul says he is not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation, hence a person to bring salvation, and a power to affect salvation. From this we infer that there is somewhere a primal cause for the need of salvation. To affect salvation this cause must be removed and its habitat filled with the essence of salvation.

The primal cause is evil entrenched in the heart. This generates motive power, which drives to perdition. This evil saps the vitality of the soul. It stifles and finally kills the virtuous elements in man. It enthralls the soul, shackles humanity in ignorance and superstition.

Thus sin and its complements have alienated the soul from God. They have plunged it from its first estate, and placed within man the seeds of death and misery. This cause implies death to the good, the true, the spiritual, and is the cause of spiritual darkness in the world. It places man on the brink and every moment threatens to hurl him to the bottom with its thunder bolts.

A soul's salvation implies that means have been provided for salvation; that a plan of salvation is given; that an executor able to execute is back of the plan. Salvation means purging the heart, renovating the chambers of the soul, pouring in the oil of gladness, filling the soul with divine love. The downward career of the soul will be checked. The lost soul-vitality will be restored. The noxious gasses hovering over the soul will be scattered by beams of heavenly light.

Liberty will dawn in the heart and the chains of darkness will fall from humanity for evermore. Then will men be free indeed. The powers of darkness will be alienated from the soul. The soul attitude will be right and the soul will be made an heir of heaven. The seeds of eternal life will find lodgment in the heart, a desire to extend the virtuous will be born within, a zeal for the dissemination of truth will arise, an ease of conscience will be given and a spirit of security will be insured. In short, there will be a new creation, a revivifying, a regeneration of the soul.

Salvation, the process of saving, deals with and frees the soul from all that binds and retards the full development of the soul. When the soul is aglow with the results of salvation, these results radiate and penetrate the complexity of the human organism. Hence salvation is reflexive in nature.

The plan of salvation is divine in nature. To accept and obey is enjoined if we would merit and enjoy the fruits of salvation. Salvation is supernatural. Natural agencies avail nothing in the act of salvation. Salvation is accompanied by the indwelling of the Spirit. Salvation is living such a life that the design of creation is exemplified in the soul and manifested to the world.

A human being standing on the brink of destruction is snatched away in safety. The mind and body of man, steeped in sin, debauched in sensuality, distorted by sophistry are restored to their primitive purity and utility. The soul which once was covered and filled with sin is purified and burnished and filled with truth. Human power and agency are unable to accomplish these results. Through Christ alone are these results achieved. The fulfillment of the divine work in a soul brings salvation. This is supernatural. The miraculous clusters around the birth of Christ. We see it in his work. We behold it with awe in his death, resurrection and ascension.

The salvation of a soul is dependent on the efficacy of these miraculous manifestations, hence I see no reason why we may not say the salvation of a soul is a miracle.

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What others think of us is less important than what others ought to think of us. It is better to be in disfavor with others because we are misunderstood than to be in favor because we are supposed to deserve better than we do. And in the long run the surest way of winning the favor of those whose opinion is worth most is by deserving it.

A SOFT ANSWER.

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A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger. Prov. 15: 1.

These are the words of Solomon, probably one of the world's wisest men. In his work we find the most wise thought in fewest words. Say nothing of his inspiration he was wonderfully endowed. There is no doubt as to his familiarity with facts and laws. He could put an ocean of meaning in few words as in the above.

1. A soft answer, what is it? It has been said, "It is not a reply marked by intellectual feebleness but one inspired by the spirit of modesty and graciousness." A soft answer should not imply a compromise with truth or any yielding to unrighteousness on the part of the one answering. The expression should be firm in substance but soft in language and spirit.

Harsh answers and angry words are a source of strife and evil doings. We should be more critical as to these faults of temper in ourselves, and not so prone to excuse others on the ground of "temperament." Cross words not only arouse anger in others but they leave the speaker in a worse condition after spoken. They react wonderfully on the speaker, to debase his nature and destroy its sweetness. How much more wise is he who avoids irritable, angry words.

2. Effect of a soft answer. There is a great truth underlying the text, not only do soft words not stir up anger, but they calm it. A soft answer turneth away wrath, this always has been the result and will be. When anger is turned away, the heart is more susceptible to truth and ready to yield to reason. Therefore if a pastor would keep in the good graces of his people he should avoid angry and hot words. He should greet them as well as rebuke them in a spirit of love and kindness. Great care should be taken to teach the young people to understand the importance of kind and gentle speaking, and there is no better way to teach them than by example.

3. How can we learn to answer softly? The use of harsh words become a habit, each one prepares the way for worse ones until eventually we become miserable ourselves and annoy those around us. We should cultivate the faculties, for love is not made perfect at first, it comes after a continual training of the faculties. Much can be done by being watchful and patient. The great cure for this trouble is from Jesus, the great physician, "Ye must be born again." We must let God's truth rule in our hearts, let the grace of